L.A. ARCHITECT
A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER / AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

AL MARTIN TO BE HONORED NOVEMBER 27



On November 27, the Third Annual SCC/AIA Recognition Dinner will honor Albert C. Martin, FAIA, for his outstanding contributions to the profession. The evening's festivities will be held in the Gold Room of the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, beginning with a no-host reception at 7 p.m., at which time an exhibit featuring the work of Albert C. Martin & Associates will be on display. Dinner will begin at 8 p.m., after which Martin will address the gathering. During the course of the evening program, the results of the 1980 Chapter elections will be announced.

The cost of the dinner is $13 per person. Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP to the Chapter office by Friday, November 23, using the envelope enclosed with this *L.A. ARCHITECT* mailing, or calling 624-6561.

Since 1945, Albert C. Martin has been a partner of Albert C. Martin & Associates, one of the oldest and most honored architectural, engineering and planning firms in the western U.S.

A graduate of USC, Martin is a past Director and President of the SCC/AIA, a past Vice-President of the CCAIA, and his community activities are almost too numerous to mention. He was appointed by Mayor Bradley to chair the L.A. 200 Committee, the planning arm for the Los Angeles bicentennial celebration. He is a director and past President of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, board member of the Automobile Club of Southern California and the California Chamber of Commerce.

A special feature on the Martin firm will be found inside this issue of *L.A. ARCHITECT*.

Previous SCC/AIA members honored by the Chapter are the late A. Quincy Jones, FAIA (in 1977), and Ed Killingsworth, FAIA (in 1978).

GIO PONTI: 1891 - 1979

Gio Ponti, who died in September at age 88 in Milan, was a jack of all crafts — hand and machine — and a master of them all. Yet he designed one of the great buildings of postwar Europe. He could combine designs of costumes for a production of *Orpheus* for La Scala with plans for the fine Montecatini Block of 1936.

He wrote a volume of one-line poems on clouds with his own witty illustrations (one, a cloud seated on his handsome version of a Chiavari chair) during the years he was engaged in the design of Italy's emblem of postwar vitality — the Pirelli Tower (Ponti, Fornaroli and Rosselli, engineering by Nervi).

The boat-shaped building rose out of a heavily-bombed area near the railway station, far enough away from the historic center that it was outside the unwritten law that no building rise in height above the Duomo. The Pirelli Tower, with its sheer polygonal sides, is the first thing you see when queueing up for a taxi at the Milan station.

He was an anomaly. His respect for the tradition and symmetry of the 19th century did not keep him from using all available technology and modern floor planning in his buildings, from 1923 on. He was not a polemicist, but when he founded *Domus* magazine in 1928 he invited the Rationalists to publish in its pages, and welcomed them to exhibit in 1933 at the Triennale he organized.

He was the first to introduce art into industry when in 1923 he designed a family of ceramic forms for mass production. (The handpainted designs on them were neo-classical.) He never ceased to design for industry, just as he never stopped painting — he exhibited his late paintings a few years before his death.

Among his designs for bathroom fixtures was a toilet with seat molded as carefully to the human form as were the backs of his chairs. In his own apartment on Via Dezza were floor tiles of white with diagonal stripes in clear blues and yellows; he designed his own tile to face the Pirelli Tower, Denver Museum and late buildings. The flat diamond-shaped domes in the tiles for the Museum were a little like some of his textiles; the latter, often in the blues and yellows he loved, were in designs predating the op-art of the 1960s. I have propped the morning paper for years against a tea cozy covered with his advancing and receding oval forms in yellow and dove gray.

But every room in the house has some evidence of his spontaneous and irrepressible talent — like a drawing of a sheaf of wheat with the message sprouting from the heads of the grain. We shared a birthday, and this will be the first in 15 years that I have not cabled *Evivva Gio!*

Esther McCoy

A REPORT ON ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION

The CCAIA Blue Ribbon Committee on Registration Issues succeeded in accomplishing its short-range objectives of reinstating funding for the State Board of Architectural Examiners, and also defeating the Governor's attempt to eliminate the Architectural Practice Act. It was also concerned with deferring the building designers' legislation, SB 250, and supporting the sunset legislation. Both bills were put over until next year.

The Blue Ribbon Committee's accomplishments were achieved mainly through total involvement of the CCAIA membership up and down the state, as well as excellent work by the Council staff, which resulted in effective lobbying in Sacramento, which, in turn, resulted in significant support of our short-range plan by the Legislature.

The Blue Ribbon Committee has now been phased out, and the CCAIA is concentrating on the long-range goals, which have been assigned to a Steering Committee under Ward Deems, FAIA. Under the Steering Committee there are three subcommittees as follows:

1. A subcommittee to investigate and eventually draft a new Architectural Practice Act. This subcommittee is co-chaired by Mark Hornberger, AIA, from northern California and Stanley M. Smith, AIA, from southern California.
2. A subcommittee on enforcement problems of the Board of Architectural Examiners. Chairman of this subcommittee is Russell Levikow, FAIA.
3. A subcommittee on education and the architectural examination, which is chaired by George Hasslein, FAIA, Dean of the School of Architecture, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

These subcommittees are working closely with the Board of Architectural Examiners in helping to design appropriate steps and activities for successful resolution of these remaining issues.

Funding for these activities is being handled by assessments of the CCAIA membership, contributions from non-AIA registered members of the profession, and, it is hoped, matching funds from private endowments such as the National Endowment for the Arts, and financial and consulting participation by the National AIA.

Stanley M. Smith, AIA
Chairman, Blue Ribbon Committee

Lecture Review: HALPRIN'S SPECIAL PLACES

Lawrence Halprin was an especially appropriate speaker to kick off the fall SCC/AIA lecture series September 11. The talk, sponsored jointly by the Chapter and its landscape architectural counterparts, centered on two subjects: achievement of "deep environmental experiences" and the design of places that "enlarge people's lives." On both topics, Halprin proved engaging and entertaining. But the talk left most listeners with a craving for more information on design synthesis and project implementation.

Examples were offered of environmental experiences on several scales. One was Halprin's newly-finished coastal retreat near Sea Ranch, his first experience in siting and designing a new building exclusively for himself. More profound than the house is his concept of community in this rather desolate area: a general store, a gas station, and a public telephone from which he conducts an international practice.

Halprin's pioneering work in environmental sensitivity training, turning all the outdoors into a design laboratory, seems tamer in this era of self-actualization than it must have in its infancy; still, Halprin pursues it zealously and takes an earnest interest in observing and cataloguing the interactions of his students and nature.

Halprin design projects are, of course, no strangers to the architectural press. Yet his presentation shed new light. For example, the revitalization of downtown Charlottesville, Virginia included the usual array of clean-up, coordination, and street furniture elements — pretty conventional stuff these days. But on closer scrutiny one saw that the colors were extraordinary, there was an uncommon sensitivity to historic features and regionalism, and the active role of local citizens was something of a landmark.

Other projects featured "progressive spaces": Auditorium Forecourt in Portland, the San Francisco Embarcadero Center, and Freeway Park in Seattle. All these projects bear what have come to be Halprin signatures: constant activity, water noise, visual and physical relief, places of solitude, and even places of danger. Halprin projects don't kill with kindness; they offer choices as wide-ranging as their users' moods.

Halprin's delivery was unabashedly mellow, attributable to the fact that he came to Los Angeles fresh from a wilderness sojourn. That, however, does not explain his regrettable omission of hard facts on new projects, among them an especially tantalizing modernization program in Jerusalem. Rather than think Halprin coy, one prefers to regard his talk as a tasty introduction to the Halprin philosophy. Hopefully, he can be lured back to speak more directly on the evolution and implementation of his remarkable projects.

A. Jeffrey Skorneck

L.A. ARCHITECT SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE SET

Beginning in January 1980, the first *L.A. ARCHITECT* subscription increase in the publication's five-year history will take effect. The new rate, for regular subscribers, will be $10/year. A special rate for student subscribers will be instituted, at $6/year. Early subscription renewals or new subscriptions will be accepted at the present rate, $6/year, throughout the remainder of 1979. This applies, as well, to gift subscriptions, since *L.A. ARCHITECT* makes the perfect holiday gift!

A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE CENTRAL LIBRARY?

On September 26, the Los Angeles City Council voted 7-6 to reject the Council's Recreation, Library and Cultural Arts Committee recommendation supporting the controversial expansion plan for the Los Angeles Central Library which would have added large wings to the east and west sides.

The Council's decision has been interpreted by some as the death of the Central Library renovation/expansion scheme. Council President Ferraro was quoted in the *L.A. Times* as saying, "No doubt about it — the renovation idea is dead." Others, like Councilmen Braude and Yaroslavsky, view the vote as a fresh start, a chance for the private sector to step in with new ideas, and perhaps with financing.

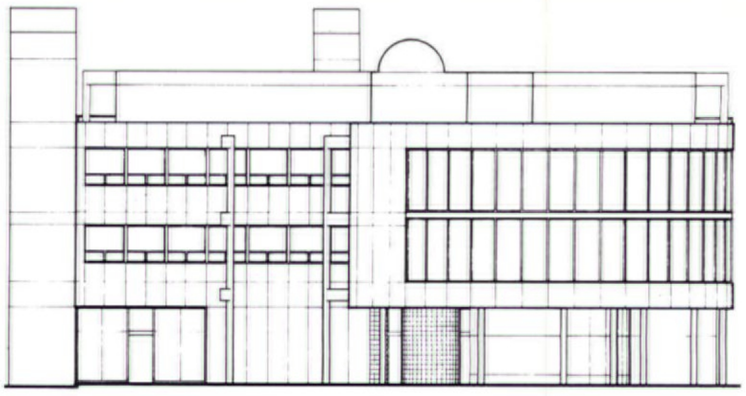
Even prior to the Council vote, Albert C. Martin & Associates presented a plan which would tie a new central library to a complex of two new concert halls — commissioned by Dorothy Chandler — on Bunker Hill. The old library, under this concept, would be brought up to code and used for a different purpose, perhaps that of a museum, at a combined cost comparable to the plan originally recommended by the Recreation, Library and Cultural Arts Committee.

Councilman Farrell has subsequently initiated a motion to make certain safety improvements in the existing library to correct violations of OSHA fire and safety standards.

Meanwhile, the complaint which the AIA filed against the City need not be answered by the City, since the main complaint was against the EIR, which had appeared to justify the plan which the Council has now rejected. AIA attorney Marjorie Steinberg of Tuttle & Taylor said that only if a new proposal comes up employing the EIR would the AIA ask the City to answer its complaint. She feels that the AIA played a large role in changing the sequence of events regarding the library. Because of this, a positive effort by the AIA toward encouraging alternative plans might be appropriate at this time.

Marilyn Fuss

Exhibition Review: CALIFORNIA STUDENT DESIGN



Elevation, Collaborative Design Center, Edward Holakiewicz, Cal Poly Pomona.

"A California Student Design Exhibition," sponsored by ASC/AIA and CCAIA, is a collection of student work completed during the past summer at the University of Southern California, Cal Poly Pomona, and the Southern California Institute of Architecture. It was displayed during the month of September on the fifth-floor gallery of the Pacific Design Center and will be exhibited at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, 14-18 November, in conjunction with the CCAIA Convention. Steven Lombardi organized and coordinated the exhibition.

It is comforting to see that the skill of communication through good drawing technique is improving throughout the Southern California school scene. Most of the exhibits demonstrated this through precise, clear drafting. However, most also lacked the notations which explain to the beholder the design intent of the project.

Understandably, each institution's work ran the gamut from very good to mediocre to rather bad.

Cal Poly Pomona's exhibit of Chang and Smulders' Shinken Chiku Housing seems overly obsessed with form and structure, with no thought to user needs. The Otavka boards of an Industrial Building show concern for large scale detail which disappears in elevation, while Dickson's Abstracta Display Plan is lacking luster and imagination and is quite static for its use. The Holakiewicz Collaborative Design Center has great scale, separation of forms in plan (why didn't this continue in the roof plan?) and excellent technique.

SCI-ARC exhibits include a bright, imaginative use of existing structural forms in the development of a floating Velodrome off Santa Monica Pier by Murisinna, Demers and Kahn, and Morera's Habitat Cluster exhibits a creative "Starwars" effort at housing in space fo 10,000 citizens. Fiaca's Harris Building Renovation seems arbitrary in its handling of existing fenestration, while the Katlov museum addition appears to be an exercise in concealing an odd-shaped structure with cascading water and gardens. The Communiversity (assumed to be SCI-ARC because of the color) is a rather interesting approach to a specific problem, but is quite shallow in presentation technique.

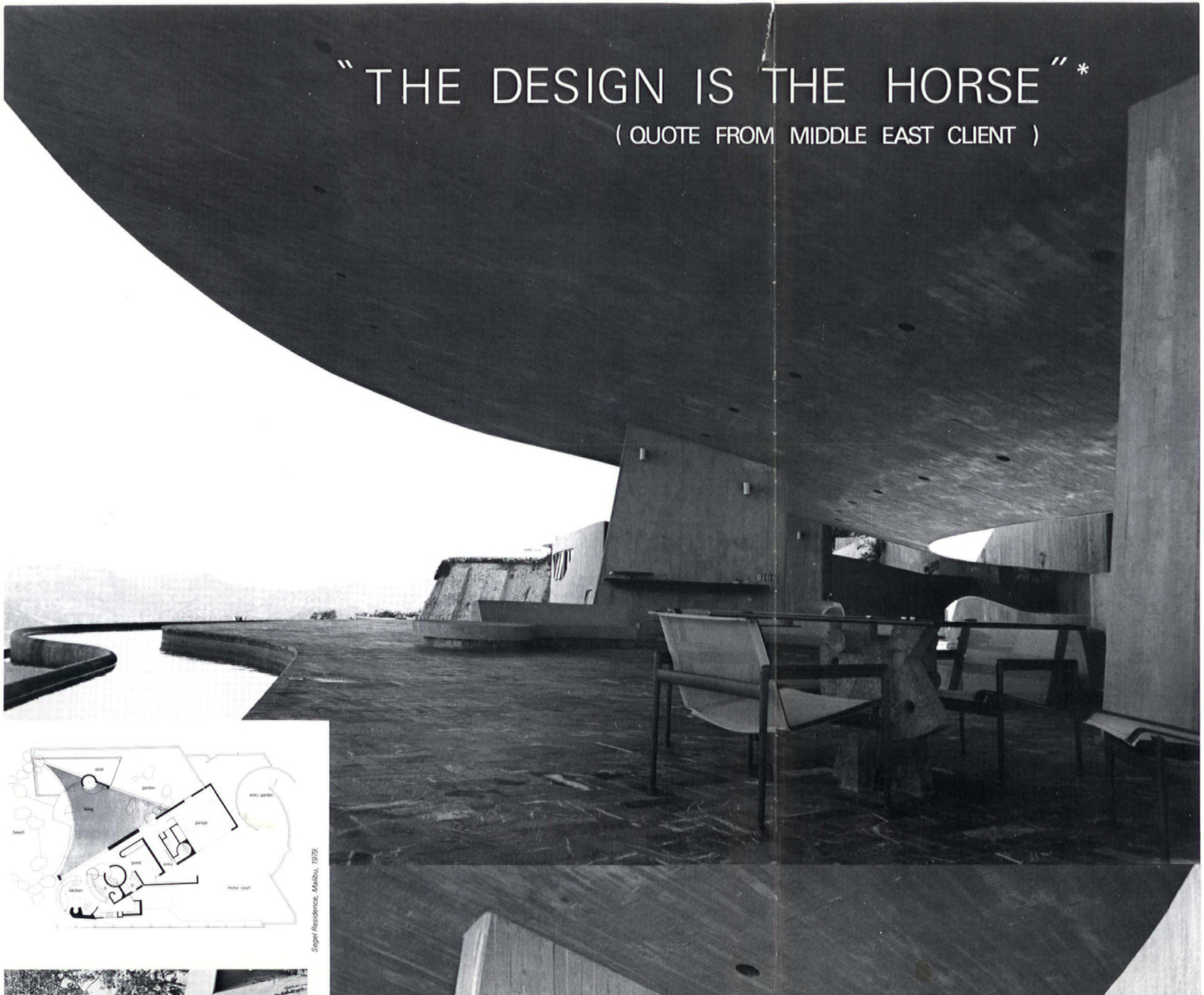
The USC exhibits were diverse in character and quality. Johnson/Thompson's Urban Bazaar was interest-

(continued on page 4)

NOVEMBER 1979
Volume 5, Number 10
Inside:

Calendar:

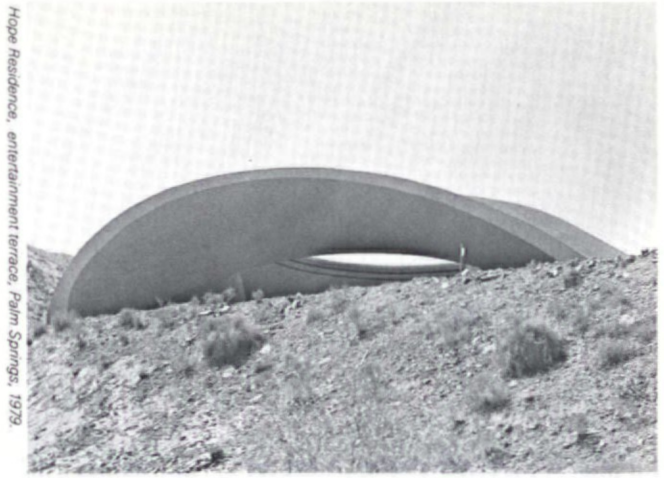
November 7: Frank Gehry, SCI-ARC, 8 p.m.
November 14: Morphosis, SCI-ARC, 8 p.m.
November 21: Studio Works, SCI-ARC, 8 p.m.
November 27: A.C. Martin Recognition Dinner, Biltmore Hotel, 7 p.m. reception, 8 p.m. dinner.
November 28: Eric Moss, SCI-ARC, 8 p.m.



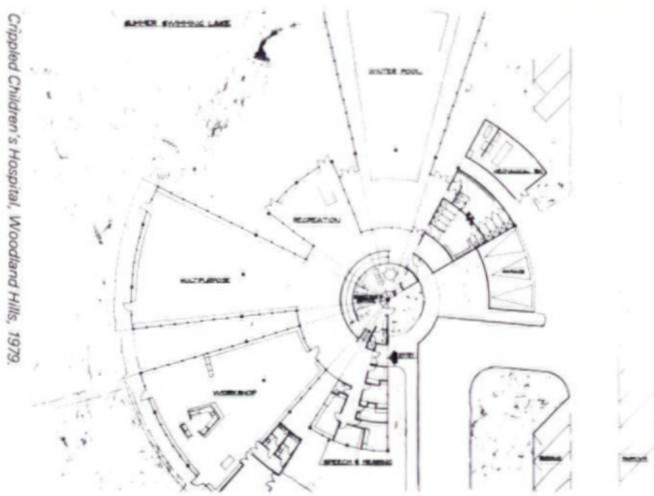
"THE DESIGN IS THE HORSE"*

(QUOTE FROM MIDDLE EAST CLIENT)

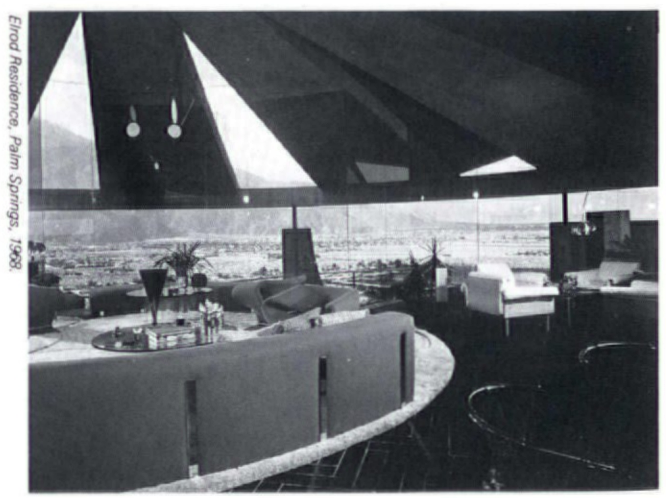
Segel Residence, Malibu, 1979.



Hope Residence, entertainment terrace, Palm Springs, 1979.



Crippled Children's Hospital, Woodland Hills, 1979.



Elrod Residence, Palm Springs, 1968.



Stevens Residence, Malibu, 1968 (photo: Julius Shulman).

CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

Summary of the 2161st meeting of the SCC/AIA Board of Directors, October 2, 1979:

• **David Martin,** chairman of the Nominations Committee, reported on the following nominations for 1980 offices and board positions: Vice-president/President-elect, Lester Wertheimer; Secretary, Harry Newman; Directors, Daniel Branigan and Martin Gelber. The Board approved the nominees.

• **Carol Newlove,** WAL President, reported on the 19th Annual Home Tour and plans for a tour of Hancock Park homes, to be held in spring of 1980, with the co-operation of the Hancock Park Historical Society.

• **Richard Hennessey,** chairman of the Building Codes Committee, reported on committee activities, including the monitoring of public hearings.

• **Raymond Ziegler** reviewed the background of the proposed seismic safety ordinance now under consideration by the City of Los Angeles and recommended Chapter endorsement of the seismic rehabilitation code.

• After a treasurer's report by **Bernard Zimmerman**, a discussion ensued on the possibility of investing the Chapter reserve fund for high yield with liquidity. **Clyde Smith** will investigate.

• **Art O'Leary,** chairman of the Ethics and Practice Committee, reported on the committee's active role in advising members of the public and the profession. This will be the subject of a future article for *L.A. ARCHITECT*.

• **Peter Creamer** presented a draft questionnaire on the subject of architectural compensation, which was approved for distribution to the Chapter membership.

• **Tom Holzbog,** chairman of the Student Affiliate Liaison Committee, was given Board approval to develop a new student affiliate application and recruitment material.

• **Harry Newman** reviewed several options for re-location of Chapter offices.

SCC/AIA Membership Report, October.

New Corporate Members: **Soomoon Kim** (EDC, Inc.); **Wilson Wong** (George Vernon Russell); **Stanley S. Kamehiro** (Self-employed); **Joseph M. Madda** (Martin Stern, Jr.,); **Jeyachandran R. Samuel** (American Develop. Corp.); **Daniel L. Mello** (Synthesis); **Philip Nettle** (Herbert Nadel); **Aaron M. Daniel** (Cannell-Heumann & Assoc.); **James E. Kinville,** transfer in from Detroit Chapter (Rossett Associates West).

New Professional Affiliates: **Earl O. Stephens** (Economist, CSU, Los Angeles); **Paul Bielenberg,** (Photographer).

New Associate Members: **Riener Nielsen, Jr.,** (Gin Wong Associates); **Kalev Alaton** (Nat. Medical Enterprises); **Denise V. Bickerstaff** (Adolpho Miralles).

The **copy deadline** for *L.A. ARCHITECT* is the **first of the month prior to publication.** Please send material to the Editor, at the Chapter office.

A **reception** in honor of **new Chapter members** will be held on December 4 at 5 p.m. in the Chapter offices, following the Board meeting. To defray costs, $3/person will be charged. The general SCC/AIA membership is cordially invited to attend.

A lecture series entitled **"Current L.A.: 10 Points of View"** continues at SCI-ARC on Wednesdays at 8 p.m., with **Frank Gehry,** November 7, **Peter deBretteville,** November 14; **Morphosis/Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi,** November 21; **studio works: Craig Hodgetts and Robert Mangurian,** November 28; **Eric Moss,** December 5; and a conclusion by **Coy Howard,** December 12.

In conjunction with the series, a continuing exhibit will be held, changing on the Tuesday of each week to display that speaker's work, from noon-6 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday at the Architectural Gallery, 209 San Juan Street, Venice.

W.A.L.

Reservations for some 100 persons attested to the interest generated by WAL's invitation to visit Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion West on October 17, followed by luncheon in Lainie's Room at the Los Angeles Playboy Club.

As if that weren't enough excitement for one week, just four days later was the occasion of the **WAL 19th Annual Home Tour.** Six homes in the Pasadena area were offered, designed by the firm of Buff and Hensman, AIA, and WAL takes this opportunity to express its deep appreciation to all those whose cooperation and dedication contributed to the Tour's success. As in the past, proceeds will be allocated to architectural and educational scholarships; watch this column for further details.

Circle the date on your calendar and plan to attend the **WAL Annual Holiday Party,** December 7, 7 p.m., at the home of **Rosalie and Kurt Meyer** and adjacent offices of **Carl Maston and Kurt Meyer.**

The **1979 Member's Exhibition** of the *L'Union International des Femmes Architects* (UIFA) has been brought to Los Angeles by the **Association of Women in Architecture,** and will feature the works of women architects, landscape designers and planners from Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Guyana, Iceland, Israel, India, Sweden, the United States, and West Germany.

The exhibition will open on November 10, at 8 p.m., at the Pacific Design Center. All are cordially invited to the gala opening party. The exhibit will continue through the month.

The **Southern California Chapter/Architectural Secretaries Association** will be meeting Tuesday, November 20, 6:30 p.m., at the Beverly Hills offices of **Maxwell Starkman & Associates.**

Slim Floyd, of Century City Blueprint, will be the guest speaker.

Reservations are being taken for members and guests by **Marilyn Spielman,** 278-6400.

A **two-day seminar** is scheduled in Los Angeles on December 6 and 7, at the L.A. Convention Center to discuss results of the **Residential Fire Test Projects** sponsored by the California Fire Chiefs Association.

The seminar will be co-sponsored by the **SCC/AIA, California Building Officials, California Fire Chiefs Association,** and the **Society of Fire Protection Engineers.**

Registration in advance is $60, or $75 at the door, luncheons and a copy of the proceedings included. To register or request more information, write to: **Leo Garcia,** Los Angeles City Fire Department, 200 North Main Street, City Hall East, Room 920, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

L.A. ARCHITECT

Published monthly (except August) by the
Southern California Chapter
American Institute of Architects
Suite 510, Bradbury Building,
304 South Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 624-6561

One-year mail subscriptions: $6.00
Advertising rates are available
from the Chapter office.

Editorial contributions and correspondence are invited. The opinions stated are those of the authors only, and do not reflect the official position of the AIA or the Southern California Chapter, except where noted.

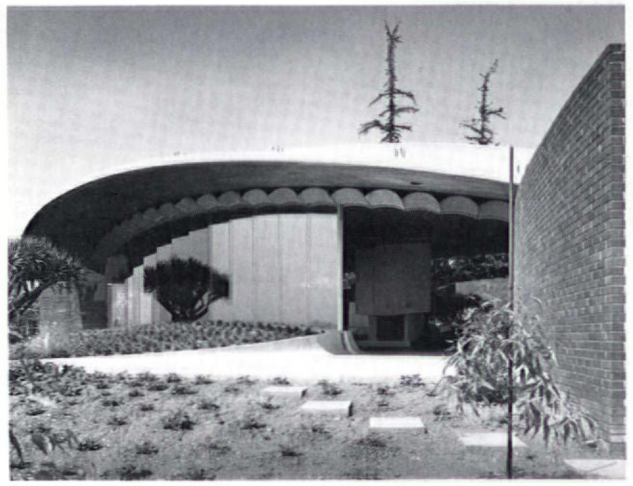
Appearance of names and pictures of products and services in either editorial or advertising does not constitute an endorsement of same by the AIA or the Southern California Chapter.

James Pulliam, FAIA
President

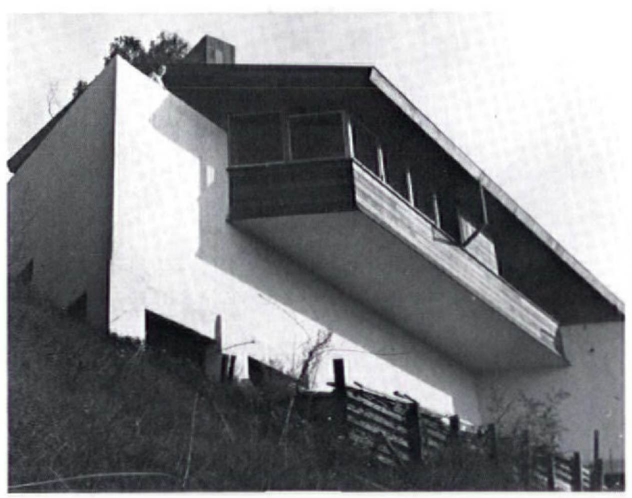
Margaret Bach
Editor
Ken S. Evans
Advertising Director



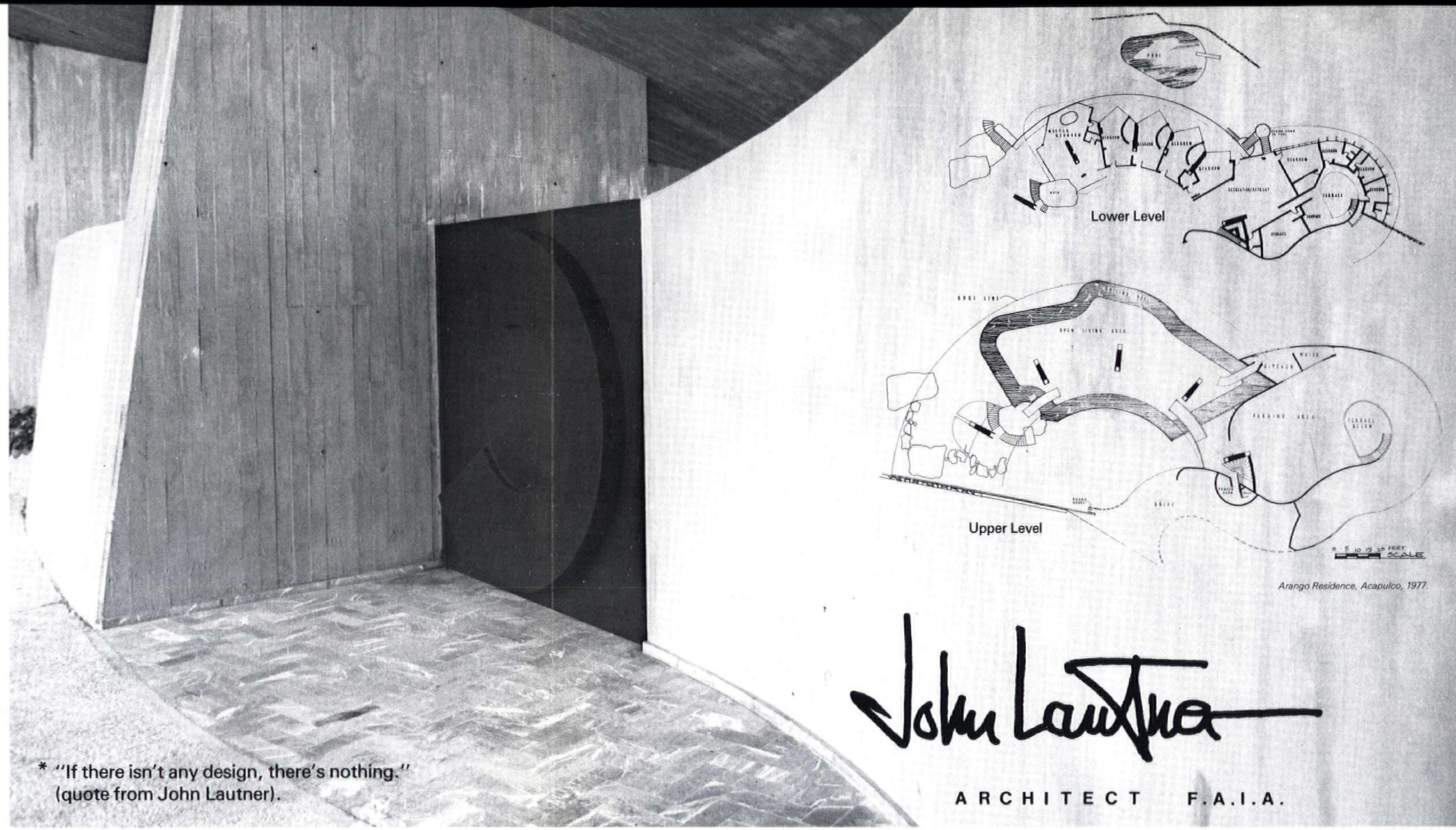
Wolff Residence, Los Angeles, 1963.



Silvertop Residence, Los Angeles, 1957-63 (photo: Julius Shulman).



Lautner Residence, Los Angeles, 1939.



Arango Residence, Acapulco, 1977.

* "If there isn't any design, there's nothing." (quote from John Lautner).

John Lautner

ARCHITECT F.A.I.A.

Graphic Design: Lautner

JOHN LAUTNER: ARCHITECT AND ICONOCLAST

John Lautner, FAIA, is an iconoclast, an artist who breaks with tradition to pursue his very personal, unconventional architecture. He is not interested in winning a popularity contest. Whether you like his work or not is a personal judgment, but when you encounter a Lautner building you know you are in the presence of something unique. He tends to make us look at spaces and forms differently and reassess our concepts of architecture.

John Lautner was born July 16, 1911, in Marquette, Michigan. He went to high school in Marquette and New York City and was graduated from Northern Michigan University in 1933 with an AB in English. That same year Lautner, at the age of 22, went to work fo Frank Lloyd Wright. He worked with Wright from '33 to '39, commuting from Taliesen East in Wisconsin to Taliesen West in Arizona. Lautner arrived in Los Angeles in 1939 to supervise the construction of two Wright houses; Sturgess and Obler. He designed his own house that same year, later served as an associate with Douglas Honnold, and has maintained an active architectural practice in Los Angeles over the last forty years.

In 1946, Lautner officially opened his own office in Hollywood where he has remained, outliving several architectural styles and local fads through the pursuit of his individualistic art.

John Lautner is an architect's architect. He pursues architecture for architecture's sake, always trying to make a statement about space, form and technology. When asked how he stays in business, Lautner exclaims with candor, "People come to me because they want architecture," and architecture of a very personal nature is what they get.

By maintaining a staff of five to six people on the top floor of his Hollywood Boulevard atelier, Lautner gives his clients the personal attention they demand. Currently he has a staff of five, including two key architects, Helena Arahuete, Project Architect for the Crippled Children's Hospital, an important non-residential project, and Warren Lawson, Project Architect on the Segel House in Malibu.

Certain Lautner buildings pay homage to Wright in their use of stone and wood and angular forms. The Wolff House of 1963 is a prime example. Wood moldings wrapping around the angled ceiling are reminiscent of Wright's Coonley House. The spatial sequence and interlocking forms seem to grow out of Wright's Taliesen East and adapt that architectural concept to the steeply sloping Hollywood Hills.

In the last two decades, Lautner has been exploring freer, more daring forms with fervor and creative energy, uninhibited by the current architectural vogue. This can be seen in the body of work beginning with Silvertop, 1957-1964, and including: the Stevens Residence, 1968; the Elrod Residence, 1968; the Arango Residence, 1977; and, more recently, residences for Bob Hope and Gilbert and Joanne Segel, both to be completed this year.

The Stevens Residence in Malibu accomplishes, according to Lautner, "All kinds of things that are impossible to do." On a 35-foot lot, Lautner has dexterously arranged five bedrooms, five bathrooms, a living room, dining room, painting studio, children's playroom and swimming pool in a house of 3500 square feet. The intersecting concrete catenary curves form a striking silhouette along the beach.

More dramatic in its setting and in its use of exposed concrete is the Elrod Residence, also completed in 1968, in Palm Springs. Gebhard and Winter call it "Lautner at his best; a low concrete circular spaceship worked into the west exposed rocky hillside."

Impressed with the strength and image of the Elrod Residence, Bob Hope commissioned Lautner to do his own extraordinary house in Palm Springs. The large vaulted spaces bear a distinct similarity to Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal at JFK, but Lautner explains, "TWA is a completely different thing. The concept that I had is basically a cone that has the same angle as a volcano, so the slopes really fit into the mountains...and then I cut these arches in the cone. It's a much simpler structure than TWA."

The scale and function of the two buildings are quite different. Still, one senses an affinity for Wright, for Saarinen and for Bruce Goff in Lautner's free and expressionistic approach.

John Lautner believes deeply in the creative process, explaining that, "To me architecture is an art. It has to have feeling. It has to have something for human beings." In referring to his mentor Frank Lloyd Wright, Lautner says, "He could actually create joy in a building...to me this combination of repose and joy and infinity...those values are fantastic.... That's architecture."

The sweeping roofline of the Segel House in Mailbu "is like a cave," says Lautner. It gives a sense of intimacy while boldly expanding out toward the ocean view. Gilbert Segel thinks Lautner is "probably one of the all-time architectural geniuses." Yet it took the creative teamwork of his wife, dance therapist Joanne Segel and Project Architect Warren Lawson to bring Lautner's vision to reality.

And John Lautner is an architect of vision, who perceives the spaces he creates extending outward from the building to infinity, not unlike the Baroque concept of space and form. "Those disappearing spaces," explains Lautner, "are the most enduring and most lasting. It's exactly the opposite of a box, which is the most confining."

After more than forty years of individual expression, John Lautner remains a witty and irreverent observer of the architectural scene. Some personal observations:

- On Eero Saarinen: "He was one of the few who really tried to do architecture, and actually did it."
- On Bruce Goff: "I like Goff, sure. I have to admire him for trying all these things. Some of them are good and some of them are lousy, but most of them involve some kind of an idea."
- On Richard Meier: "What if they they were painted black. Would they still be architecture?"
- On "Post-Modern" Architects: "They're discovering that Modernism is dead, but that's just another style, another fad, which is superficial, if that's all the understanding they had anyway."
- On Los Angeles: "It's still a superficial, phony baloney."
- On John Lautner: "I've never done a superficial, little handy- dandy gimmick...I've tried to come up with a real reason and idea for every job... and almost every one does have a reason."

Michael Franklin Ross, AIA

EXHIBITION

(continued from front page)

ing, as was the Pickard, *et al.*, Multi-Project board, but the latter denied the fact that these were sixth-year students. The Community Art Centers by Tyler and Sakuma were very good presentations in quality of content and technique, as was the Venice District Study by Chessum and Gregorio. Unfortunately, the lighthearted, loose studies degenerated into tight rigid proposals. The Ashby, etc., Group presented some excellent drawing techniques, although the work was obscure in its intent. Landefield's Vacation House aroused interest by its concern for buildable details and adapation of components to various sites.

One exhibit, unsigned and unclassified by school, presented a study of the Hollywood Boulevard area. Regrettably, the excellent quality of the drawings was apparent only if one took the time to peer closely to the very light, photographically reproduced lines.

For the most part, the exhibit showed considerable talent in communication and technique. Along with this, however, came a lot of work which was either very interesting and not clear or was very clear and not interesting. Several boards failed to indicate either school affiliation or author, and went on to be dull because of the lack of information to keep the viewer's interest.

Additionally, the students would be better served if they were taught to communicate ideas on paper without the supplement of arm-waving and esoteric verbiage to cover up a lack of clear definition.

The most unfortunate thing about the exhibit was its physical remoteness. The Pacific Design Center is visited by a large number of professionals each day and a spot near the third-floor outdoor restaurant or in the first-floor lobby would have been so much more valuable. Certainly, room could have been made for these seven pylons in a more accessible location.

Note, however, that the exhibition will circulate among the architectural schools in 1980, as follows: January, Berkeley; February, San Luis Obispo; March, Pomona; April, SCI-ARC, May, USC; and June, UCLA.

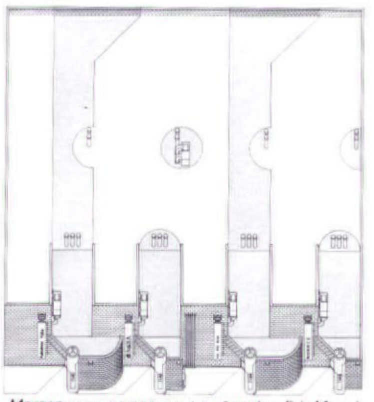
Donald C. Axon, AIA

A CONVERSATION: MOSS & WURMAN

Several months ago, Richard Saul Wurman, FAIA, interviewed Eric O. Moss, AIA, on a variety of architectural topics. What follows are some excerpts from that dialogue.

Wurman: Could you talk about your downtown building?

Moss: We did the Morgenstern warehouse on Main St. in downtown Los



Morgenstern warehouse, Los Angeles, Eric Moss/ Jim Stafford, Architects, 1978.

Angeles. While Robert Venturi's approach is that Main St. is almost all right, our approach was that Main St. is mostly all wrong.

We tried to take a social perspective in the sense that the neighborhood, at 12th and Main, was a very barred up, defensive, junior version of Manhattan's garment district. So we tried to bring a kind of exuberance to that place. Whatever bars would be put up would disappear in the face of all the other noise we hit the street with. There's something exuberant, maybe in a sort of bombastic kind of way, about the building, and I think that represents a social point of view.

Another thing we did is paint the roof in a funny way, and we painted it in a way that the only way you can see it is from the surrounding office buildings. It's a kind of road map on the roof where to put utilities, but also it is a strange thing for a couple of reasons. First, we wanted some aspect of surprise — to present a face to the people who were in those high buildings around who must be very sleepy doing what they're doing. So at least in the short run, we can energize them a little bit.

Also, there is a "Plains of Nazga" reference in our building — referring to those big diagrams in the Peruvian landscape which people hypothesize have some meaning to somebody as perhaps a cosmic offering. It has that dimension.

In terms of what we did on the front of the building, we used those big cylindrical sewer pipes, and they're concrete, and there's the idea one shouldn't paint concrete. I was taught that. That was part of my education, and your education. We acknowledged that point of view to the extent we left pieces of those columns unpainted, but we painted parts of them, too. We did the same thing with the concrete block. A piece of it was a raked joint that was waterproofed. Another piece of it, which is a curved piece made from a radial block, is a flush joint, and is painted so that in a certain sense I regard it as a dialogue between blocks, where one piece of wall says: "Look, we share a block wall that is built in increments because the raked joint shows the pieces." With the raked joints, you can see what it's made of, and in another case we get a piece of wall where the joints are flush which makes the wall a little ambiguous — more like a wall that's monolithic — less like a wall which is made out of pieces.

We also used some hardware, but I don't think we used it like Rogers uses it in the Pompidou Center. That is to say,



(photo: Daniel Zimbaldi)

we don't use it in a religious way. Every time you see a duct, you genuflect.

Wurman: What would you do differently in the building if you did it again?

Moss: It hasn't really been that long. In fact, we did another scheme for it. For the property next door, which the same owner also owns, we did a facade. I think the change which was done on the building, and what was done on the remodeling represents still a further evolution away from things that could be still recognizable as doctrines of modern architecture. In terms of the kind of colors that were used, for example, black, gray and white is now reactionary. It wasn't reactionary when Le Corbusier was doing it. If you don't want black, white and gray, then red, blue and yellow were O.K. All that



(photo: Daniel Zimbaldi)

seems to have broken down into the use of other colors now, like signing up in a Robert Stern school of pastels. We don't want to sign up in anybody's school.

Wurman: Not only your conversation, but everyone's conversation is laced with references about things they don't want to do, not doing what someone else does.

Moss: I think that there's something of that in every kind of creative work because I think one does work against the background one knows and goes along with that, or goes against that.

Somehow the way one justifies work is by making references to somebody else who is doing something different which somehow makes it appear the work one is doing is not so much internally motivated as externally generated. As a reaction to the other guy so if you don't want to do something to ingratiate yourself, or else you want to do something in which there's an opposition to him in order to generate a reaction....

There was and still is a "My God, look at the Brooklyn Bridge, or the Golden Gate Bridge, or the John Hancock Building — look what we can do." It's kind of bloody incredible with this sort of technological dexterity that we have, and I think in the '20s architects felt they were a part of an avant-garde technology, science was figuring out how to do it and architects were implementing it. That's why everybody was looking at Cape Kennedy or a North Sea oil rig.

Wurman: What I like about oil rigs is they all look the same but are yet variations on a theme.

Moss: Well yeah, because oil rigs are sort of an unintentional Pompidou Center. We have to pay $250 per sq. foot in order to claim we're building something off the shelf, and it's not off the shelf anymore. Also, the extrapolation from the oil rig to Pompidou is in the translation.

Wurman: Lou Kahn said you only say something new to one other person.

Moss: That's absolutely true, so next time you say it it won't be new. It might be new to the listener, but not to you.

Wurman: There's a difference between improvement, invention and questioning, and just doing something to be different. We're at a time in architecture where the name brands don't seem to be trying to make something better. They're trying to make something different.

Moss: I think the question, or the definition is, we need the supply. It's what it means to do something better, and it has to do, I think, with what you're talking about, at least in part; it has something to do with utility which in and of itself is not architecture.

Le Corbusier cited an example of the artist's right to do certain things which are beyond utility: There was a Swiss architect by the name of Roth who worked in his studio and he was an impetuous sort of person. On one occasion in anger, he kicked a wire mesh wastebasket because he couldn't stuff enough papers in it. He dented it, and made a bit of a mess out of it, but it then accommodated more papers. There was a drawing in an article of the two wastebaskets, before and after. The question of utility seems to be then exposed because certainly it was more useful after Roth kicked it, and yet as a visual assembly of pieces it had lost its fundamental order.

Le Corbusier goes on to make a case for those organizing means. The Golden Section is O.K., but you know the Golden Section doesn't just belong to the Beaux Arts or to Pythagoras, but his message ends with a fantastic line: This German word, *sachlich*, which I think means a kind of objectification of architecture, impersonal architecture. The *sachlich* Le Corbusier says is part of his work, is like the bricks that make a wall. The question is *what wall?* So that having objectified the components, I think that's a fantastic line — *what wall? What wall?* is the question that the best architects will ask.

Teaching Positions

The School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA is seeking candidates for teaching positions in the following fields: Environmental Controls, Computer Applications, Architectural History, and Design. Candidates should also be prepared to assume responsibilities in administrative areas and to conduct research or actively engage in practice. Appointments will be made either at the beginning or senior levels. Preference will be given candidates with advanced scholastic preparation as well as experience in teaching, research or practice in areas of teaching speciality.

Candidates should apply to the Staffing Comm., Arch/Urban Design, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024. Minority and women candidates are encouraged to apply. UCLA is an equal opp./affirmative action emp.

ACMA THE WORK OF ALBERT C. MARTIN & ASSOCIATES





















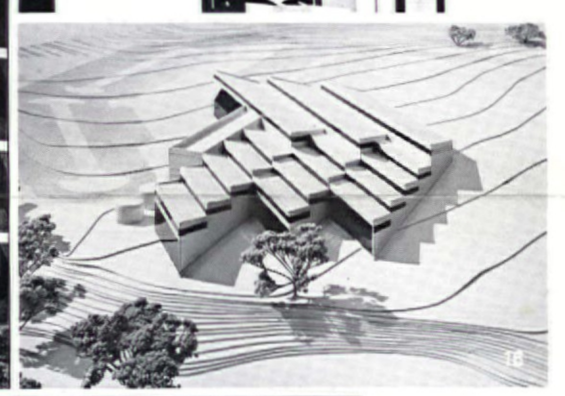






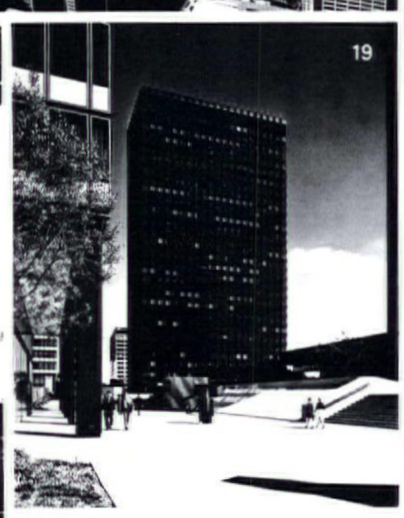


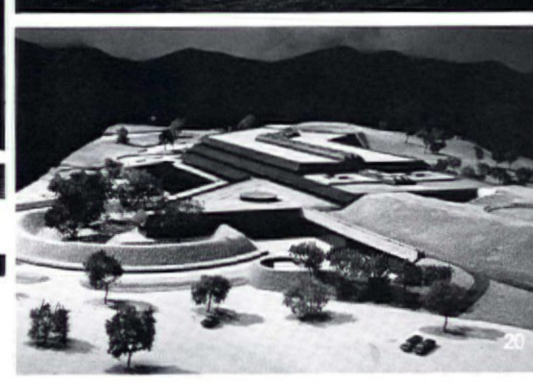












Perhaps the word dynasty is too big to apply to three generations of a prominent architectural family, yet, the "large scale" of the term seems to apply to the family of Albert C. Martin. That dynasty, over the last 74 years, has wrought an incredibly strong impression upon the Los Angeles community and its skyline. Has it been that long? I know it has.

Years ago I was part of the team which was presenting A.C. Martin & Associates' proposal for the M.G.M. Studios complex to the Board of Directors in New York City. A board member, an uninformed Easterner, asked Al Martin to tell the Board something about his organization. Al rose, thought for a moment and said, "In 1905 my father started the architectural and engineering firm I am representing." He paused briefly and then, with that characteristic smile of both innocence and assertiveness, added, "and ever since then we have been at it." He remained standing for a second or two and then sat down. There were no more questions, everybody was perfectly satisfied that the question was fully answered. Al was magnificently cool. He got away with an understatement while displaying at the same time such dignity that no person dared to ask further questions.

Another memory that illustrates the character of the dynasty concerns Al's father, who came visiting the office one late morning a few years before he died. He was wearing a long grey smock — for old time's sake, I guess. There was a newly hired young woman sitting in front of me busily drawing lines. As the "Old Timer" was going by, he noticed the new face and with a bit of a twinkle in his eye stopped and said: "hello!" The busy lady ignored the stranger, who having repeated his greetings a few times finally said, "you know I work here...have been around for quite some time" and with a happy smile walked away.

The above vignettes are but samples of a style of an unusual organization, led by unusual men. An organization catering predominately to sophisticated, extremely demanding corporate clients. Yet while maintaining a highly professional standard, it manages to retain a rarely encountered human element.

While other firms refer presumptuously to their "systems approach." Martin's firm could refer to their "human approach." Although the office is businesslike, professional and efficient, and when necessary, highly competitive, there is concurrently that intangible element: a combination of passion and compassion. Passion for the hear gear, high level professionalism, compassion for human beings. Putting it in other words, the Martins have merged perceptive architectural intentions with excellent ideas and lofty ideals.

I am tempted to suggest that Al Martin should be named Dean of a Post-Graduate School of Architecture of Los Angeles. Perhaps this is a symbolic title but, I think, an appropriate one, since Al has always been good at showing us the positive and constructive, and his famous office has launched a great number of us into the profession of architecture.

There is now a whole fraternity of us in the community; the A.C. Martin "EX." While at Martin's we learned some good habits, we acquired better manners, we found out how to work with other team members. We received our "post graduate" education.

Ed Martin, Al's brother and a partner in the firm, is a structural engineer and a highly organized executive who manages this complex ACMA team. Like the rest of the dynasty, he savours the long-standing Martin professional heritage. Ed has a big heart in his very own style. One of his special characteristics has always been his enthusiasm for giving recognition and credit to the individual members of the team, directly in front of the clients.

Al Martin's son, David Martin, also a partner in the firm, is now heading up ACMA's Design Department. Since he deals with the creative, form-giving and inventive work, he has the responsibility for the most consequential part of the firm's products and hence its image.

Thus the dynasty goes on. The highly structured and resourceful architectural organization with that unique Martin touch keeps sparring with corporate giants. They have designed California Churrigueresque churches, scientific laboratories, shopping centers and high-rise towers with an equal ease. What next? Whatever it will be, it will be done well. After all, the firm was started in 1905, and "ever since then they have been at it."

Mark Bielski, AIA

Mark Bielski worked for A.C. Martin & Associates from 1955-56 and again from 1963-68. He is currently Director of Design for Cannell-Heumann & Associates.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. *Two Martin generations, circa 1955, l. to r., Albert C. Martin, Jr., FAIA, Albert C. Martin, Sr., AIA, J. Edward Martin, ASCE.*
2. *Terra Cotta detail, Ventura County Courthouse, 1911.*
3. *Ventura County Courthouse, Ventura, 1911.*
4. *St. Vincent's Church, Los Angeles, 1923 (photo: Julius Shulman).*
5. *Grauman Million Dollar Theater, Los Angeles, 1919.*
6. *Terra Cotta detail, Million Dollar Theater.*
7. *Desmond Building, Los Angeles, 1924.*
8. *Egyptian Swimming Club, Los Angeles, 1920s (project).*
9. *Auburn Cord Building (now remodeled as the Atlantic Richfield Mariposa Building), Los Angeles, 1931 (photo: Starrett).*
10. *May Company Wilshire, Los Angeles, 1939.*
11. *Los Angeles City Hall, designed in association with John Austin and John Parkinson, 1928 (drawing: Hugh Ferris).*
12. *St. Basil's Church, Los Angeles, 1969.*
13. *Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Headquarters, 1965.*
14. *Wells Fargo Building, Los Angeles (under construction), in proximity to other ACMA buildings, including DWP, Security Pacific, Union Bank, and ARCO Towers.*
15. *One Space Park, TRW Systems, Redondo Beach 1966.*
16. *Thousand Oaks Library, Thousand Oaks (construction to begin in May, 1980).*
17. *Parker-Hannifin Research, Engineering and Manufacturing Complex, Irvine, 1973.*
18. *ARCO Plaza, Los Angeles, 1974.*
19. *1900 Avenue of the Stars Office Building, Century City, 1969.*
20. *Prudential Life Insurance Co., Western Home Office, Thousand Oaks (under construction).*